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4 December 1971

DCI BRIEFING FOR
4 DECEMBER WSAG MEETING

INDIA-PAKISTAN

- I. The Indians have announced the launching of a "no holds barred" offensive in East Pakistan.
- A. According to New Delhi, Indian troops began crossing the border from all sides this morning.
- B. Pakistani troops there were already hard pressed by combined Indian-guerrilla operations.
- II. The Indians have staged air attacks on Dacca in the East and on Karachi and Lahore in the West.
- A. They claim to have hit eight Pakistani airfields in all.
- III. Each side is charging that the other is attacking on the ground in the West, but except for some artillery exchanges we have nothing to indicate that much general fighting is under way.

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IV. Pakistan proclaimed a state of war with India last night.

A. Yahya made a fiery speech to the nation earlier today, calling this the "final war with India," and talking about driving the enemy back and destroying them.

B. Mrs. Gandhi--speaking to the lower house of parliament--said the Pakistani announcement was the "ultimate folly."

1. Indian officials are making it clear that India has not declared war.

V. In recent weeks, Moscow has moved away from opposing war on the subcontinent, and it now appears that the Soviets will not try very hard to halt full scale hostilities.

A. This Soviet policy switch stems from Moscow's desire to strengthen Soviet influence in India. The Soviets see this as particularly important now that China has come out from the self-imposed isolation of the Cultural Revolution.

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B. The Soviets apparently estimate that the chances of a significant great-power confrontation over the present crisis are not very great.

VI. The actual change in Soviet policy apparently occurred during Mrs. Gandhi's trip to the USSR in late September.

- A. The Indians came away with the impression that the Soviets understood that it might not be possible to avoid war.
- B. Shortly after the visit, Moscow launched a propaganda campaign condemning Pakistan and demanding the release of Mujibur Rahman.
- C. In October and November, Moscow cooperated with Indian efforts to put political pressure on West Pakistan. This campaign included visits to New Delhi by President Podgorny and Deputy Foreign Minister Firyubin, and the conspicuous airlift--10 AN-12s-- of military assistance.

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VII. Soviet propagandists have abandoned all pretense of non-partisanship and are portraying India as the aggrieved party engaged in a purely defensive reaction to Pakistani provocations.

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